

1 June 2022

Oscar
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Tēnā koe Oscar

Request for information

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 27 February 2022, in which you asked for information regarding the Auckland Harbour Bridge protest.

My response to each of your questions can be found below.

*I request a copy of any communication between the police and other government agencies in regards to the protesters that walked across the Auckland Harbour Bridge on the 26th of February 2022.
This includes the following:*

1. *Internal emails leading up to and after the protest.*

Emails and relevant documents are attached sent to and from Superintendent Naila Hassan, Inspector Brett Batty and Inspector John Thornley who were all involved in leading Operation Coalition. There were approximately 123 staff involved in Operation Coalition and it would take an extensive search of all emails belonging to each of those involved to locate all internal emails leading up to and after the protest. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under s18(f) of the OIA, as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

Please note that excerpts have been provided for any relevant intelligence notifications as per s16(1)(e) of the OIA.

On Friday, 25 February at 1430hrs, a virtual meeting was held following intelligence received that The Freedoms and Rights Coalition (TFRC) had posted their intent to march at landmarks in five major cities, one of which was the Auckland Harbour Bridge.

The following agencies were involved in the virtual meeting:

- Superintendent Naila Hassan, Waitematā District Commander, New Zealand Police
- Auckland City Council
- Office of the Mayor
- Waka Kotahi, New Zealand Transport Agency

Police National Headquarters

180 Molesworth Street. PO Box 3017, Wellington 6140, New Zealand.
Telephone: 04 474 9499. Fax: 04 498 7400. www.police.govt.nz

At the meeting, Police provided a high-level briefing regarding the proposed Harbour Bridge protest, which was scheduled to take place the following day, Saturday 26 February. The briefing included discussions around current intelligence, planning and resourcing.

No documentation was provided for the briefing.

A number of operational planning meetings were also conducted with Waka Kotahi in the leadup to the day itself.

2. *Emails and text exchanges with other government agencies leading up to and after the protest. Including Jacinda Adern and her office.*
3. *Guidelines/procedures/advice given to police officers for the treatment of protesters on the harbour bridge*
4. *Any documentation related to deciding to allow/escort the protestors across the bridge and not prevent them from illegally walking on a motorway.*

Relevant emails and documentation are attached for you. There are no text messages between Police and other government agencies or Jacinda Adern or her office. Accordingly, this part of your request is refused under s18(e) of the OIA, as the information you have requested does not exist.

Please note some information in the attached documentation is withheld under the following grounds of the OIA:

- s6(a), to prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand
- s6(c), as the making available of the information is likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law including the prevention, investigation and detection of offences and the right to a fair trial
- s9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of natural persons
- s9(2)(ba)(i), protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence or which any person has been or could be compelled to provide under the authority of any enactment, where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied
- s9(2)(g)(i), maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty
- s9(2)(g)(ii), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the protection of such Ministers, members of organisations, officers, and employees from improper pressure or harassment.

Police considers the interests requiring protection by withholding the information are not outweighed by any public interest in release of the information. A small amount of information is also withheld as it is out of scope of your request.

5. *Details on any warnings or arrests made at the protest.*

During the protest a 40-year-old male was detained and subsequently released by Police after intentionally breaching the operation cordon, by using a motor vehicle in an attempt to join the protest group. He was later charged under the Land Transport Act 1998 and is currently going through the Court process. No other protest related arrests took place during the operation and further enforcement action in relation to protest organisers is still under consideration.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision if you are not satisfied with the response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Naila Hassan', with a horizontal line underneath.

Superintendent Naila Hassan
District Commander - Waitematā
New Zealand Police
